

American Research Center In Egypt, Inc.

NEWSLETTER



AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT, INCORPORATED

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The Annual Meeting

The response to the suggestion that brief papers be presented by members at the Annual Meeting on November 15, 1961, has been most gratifying. More papers have been offered than the time at our disposal can accommodate, and the Executive Committee has been obliged, regretfully, to exclude certain papers of great interest, to be read by title and later published in the Newsletter, if those offering the contributions will agree. A number of members who have not wished to present papers have signified their enthusiastic approval of this new departure by promising attendance at the meeting.

In response to many requests, a large part of the afternoon session will be devoted to Nubia and its salvage problems.

Tentative Program

Place: The Museum of Fine Arts Lecture Hall, Boston, Massachusetts.

Date: Wednesday, November 15, 1961.

Time: 10:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

10:00 - 10:40 Business Meeting

10:45 - 11:15 The Development of Ornament in
Ninth Century Islamic Tombstones
from Egypt

George C. Miles
American Numismatic Society

11:15 - 11:45 Roman Official Art in Egypt

Cornelius C. Vermeule
Museum of Fine Arts
Boston, Massachusetts

11:45 - 12:15 Studies in the Survival and
Continuity of Pre-Muslim
Traditions in Egyptian Islamic
Art

Ernst J. Grube
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York, New York

12:15 - 12:45 The Nⁱrn Troops at the Battle
of Kadesh

Alan R. Schulman
The University Museum
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

12:45 - 2:15 Recess for Luncheon

2:30 - 3:00	The Low Price of Land in Ancient Egypt	Klaus Baer University of California Berkeley, California
3:00 - 3:30	Nubian Temples	Henry G. Fischer The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, New York
3:30 - 4:15	Nubian Salvage Project	To be announced

This meeting, excepting for the brief business session, will be open to the public.

Letters from Egypt

From Nicholas B. Millet, Director of the Center in Cairo

Cairo, July 30, 1961

Dear Members:

Despite the concentration of current archaeological interest on the problems of the Nubian salvage project, work goes on in other parts of Egypt, and recently the newspapers have been carrying brief reports of discoveries in the Delta which will be of interest to readers of the Newsletters. Although the Department of Antiquities has laid an embargo on excavation in Egypt proper until the Nubian antiquities are properly dealt with, occasional emergencies arise which require steps to be taken without delay; the Ministry of Agriculture, as noted in an earlier Newsletter, had requested that some of the land in the Delta presently marked off as antiquities sites (and hence uncultivable) be surrendered for land grants. Upon the Department, then, has fallen the task of examining carefully each of the claimed areas to determine whether its archaeological value actually merits keeping it for thorough excavation at some time in the future. For many years it has been the law in Egypt that any area which is known to have produced antiquities in any form be set aside as inviolable, marked as restricted on the charts of the Antiquities Department; and strict penalties have been enjoined on persons who excavate or build there without the proper permission. Inevitably, the number of such reserves has grown rapidly and outdistanced the Department's ability to give each site thorough excavation - for which neither funds nor personnel available are sufficient - and the authorities have had to content themselves with merely keeping the areas under watch. From time to time funds are found for the local inspectors to examine certain spots, but there is still an enormous number of sites virtually unexplored. It is a shame that the present preoccupation of the Antiquities Department with the problem of Nubia has led them to prohibit foreign expeditions from excavation in Egypt and thus deny themselves some useful assistance in reducing this burden of unexamined sites.

In the present case the demand for cultivable land has resulted in a grant of funds for the excavation of the areas claimed by the agricultural authorities,

and quite recently (at the end of June, in fact), Dr. Nagib Farrag, chief inspector of antiquities for Lower Egypt, began excavating at Kufur Nigm, about ten miles north of Zagazig in the eastern Delta. Some time ago objects of the archaic period began to be brought into the nearby administrative town of Hehya, where they turned up in the shop of a certain Abd-er-Rahman, a local dealer of some notoriety, and the Department managed to trace the origin of some of them to the tiny village further north. The land was accordingly posted as reserved, but the authorities (in this case Dr. Rashad Nuwer, Director of Excavations) entertain such a high respect for the enterprise of the local tomb-robbers of the Hehya district that it was decided to get to work with no further delay. Dr. Nagib's efforts have now uncovered a small but apparently quite rich cemetery of small tombs of the First and Second Dynasties, containing the usual burial equipment of pottery, flint knives, and hard-stone vessels. At another site, that of Tell Basta, the ancient Bubastis, just south of Zagazig, a generous grant from the government of Sharqiya Province has made possible the beginning of excavation there, and some stone walls of uncertain date have already been uncovered.

Other excavations of the Antiquities Department promise interesting results. Dr. Rashad Nuwer is continuing his examination of the huge archaic cemetery at Turah, to the southwest of Cairo, where he has found a number of tombs of later periods mixed with the First and Second Dynasty burials which are his main concern. The investigation of the seemingly interminable rear corridor in the tomb of Seti I at Thebes, of which I wrote earlier, may recommence next month, if not before; it is now entirely in the hands of the Antiquities Department. Distant murmurs have reached us from Alexandria to the effect that Mr. Stellio, the treasure-hunting waiter, is about to recommence his much-publicized search for the tomb of Alexander the Great. The citizens of Alexandria, seemingly a little weary of Mr. Stellio's pretensions, are much more intrigued by the reports of skindivers in the great Eastern Harbour, who claim to have seen broken stonework, amphorae, and even a large stone sphinx in shallow water near the south-eastern corner of the harbour, in the area, more or less, of the old Lochias, the palace quarter of the ancient city.

With the approaching end of summer the spotlight, naturally, returns to Nubia. Both of the American expeditions will return for work during the coming season, the Chicago group going to a new concession much further to the south - the stretch of valley between the Egyptian-Sudanese border at Adindan and the Abu Simbel temples. They will examine this entire area for the first part of their season, and then move on to the enormous site of Serra East in the very northernmost part of the Sudan, just north of the town of Wady Halfa. Here they will make a start on excavating the extensive ruins of a Coptic monastery with its four chapels. The Christian remains overlie older ruins, a large brick enclosure probably represents a fort of the Middle Kingdom. I presume that the Chicago archaeologists will not be in a position to clear the older part of the site until a later season, but they may make some soundings around the Middle Kingdom walls. During the earlier part of their season, while still working in Egyptian Nubia, the Oriental Institute expedition will be working virtually next door to the joint Yale-Pennsylvania expedition under Dr. William Kelly Simpson, who will return to continue investigation at one or more points in his extensive concession in the Toshka-Arminna reach during the months of January, February, and March. Dr. W. B. Emery will excavate for the Egypt

Exploration Society at the site of Kasr Ibrim, the ancient Primis, one of the striking landmarks of the Nubian stretch of the Nile. There the enormous cliff by the river is crowned by an enormous fortified town, built by the Romans and held as a strong point by every later race of the many who have ruled the country. Dr. Emery, however, will not be working on the town, but on the extensive X-group cemeteries at the foot of the mountain. He will be thus taking up, after an interruption of some seventeen or eighteen years, the work he left unfinished when he went to Ballana and Qustul to uncover the fantastically rich mound burials of the X-group rulers.

The Austrian National Committee for the Nubian project will again send Dr. Gertrude Thausing to the Seyala area, where she will continue her general survey and work on the graffiti and rock-carvings. Drs. Donadoni and Stenico will return to work on behalf of the University of Milan, but the actual site this season is not clear. They have applied for approximately the same area, around and including the monastery of Tamit, that the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities of Leiden has requested for its expedition under Dr. Adolph Klasens. The solution of this dilemma has not yet been found insofar as I know. Incidentally, the publication of the Italians' earlier work at Ikhmindi is now out, and the volumes on the Maharraqa cemeteries and the Sabagura fortress are in preparation at the present moment. Dr. Leclant of Strasbourg is expected back for work this season, but no information is available as to the location of his concession. The government of Pakistan has now drawn up plans for an expedition - site not yet determined - which will be headed by Dr. F. A. Khan, Director of Archaeology of Pakistan and a scholar whose experience in excavation eminently qualifies him for his task. He will be assisted by Mr. Harun er-Rashid, also an experienced digger. The Indonesian Government has made a financial contribution of \$10,000 towards the salvage program.

Some notes on personnel changes in the Department of Antiquities may be in order. Dr. Abd el-Qader, previously posted at Luxor, has been made Chief Inspector at Minyah, and replaced at Luxor by Dr. Sobhy Bakry, who has shown himself most zealous and efficient. Mr. Nawawy, who has been Inspector of the Theban Necropolis for some time, has been called back for military duty and the post, one of the most important in the Department (at least for visiting scholars) has been given to Ramadan Saad. Dr. Mohammed Muhsin is now in charge of the Giza area, and Saqqara is under Dr. Abd et-Tawab el Hetta.

A recent trip to Luxor enabled me to examine the work that the Department has been carrying on at the Luxor temple. Here, immediately in front of the pylon of the temple, they have uncovered the beginning of the old stone road which led to the south gates of the great Karnak temple. Several of the large sphinxes which lined the avenue have been uncovered, and the whole has been more or less restored for a distance of some thirty or forty meters, including the roadbed itself. The sphinxes have been replaced in position and patched up, although not wholly restored and the effect is rather impressive. The two rows of couchant lions with human heads (not rams) are inscribed with the names of Nectanebo II of the Thirtieth Dynasty, and may be later replacements for older statues dating back to the great days of the temple. Incidentally, I have always admired the Department of Antiquities' taste in the matter of restorations. It is not always easy to restore without going too far, but something in the Egyptian

temperament seems to result in intelligible and technically sound restorations, which strike the right balance between dilapidation and complete reconstruction.

Nicholas B. Millet

From Edward F. Wente, Former Egyptological Fellow and Director of the Center in Egypt.

We are very grateful to Dr. Wente for taking time to send us the following account of his activities. We are always happy to hear from former Fellows of the Center, and can be very proud of their records in their scholarly careers.

August 27, 1961

Dear Members:

It has now been slightly over three years since I wrote my last communication for the American Research Center Newsletter at the end of my term as Director in Egypt. Mrs. Riefstahl has kindly asked me to contribute some lines about my activities since that time.

After leaving Egypt in the summer of 1958, I returned to the University of Chicago to complete my doctoral dissertation on matters of Egyptian grammar; and upon receiving the degree the following year, I was appointed Research Associate with the Oriental Institute's Epigraphic Expedition in Luxor, with which I have been associated these past two years.

Until the Nubian emergency assumed priority in the Expedition's program, our goal was the completion of the recording of the scenes and texts of Ramses III's mortuary temple of Medinet Habu on the west side of the river at Luxor. This task has been a long-standing project of the Oriental Institute since it was begun in the 1920's, and the ensuing years have seen the appearance of five folios (another is in press) containing facsimiles of historical and religious scenes and texts from the temple. At the time I joined the staff most of the temple had been recorded with the exception of the walls of what we call the terrace in the rear section of the temple. These are located on the inside face of the south, west, and north exterior walls above the level of the roofing slabs of the chambers and sanctuaries in the temple proper. Each scene features the king offering to deities of individual localities in Egypt and Nubia. In addition to information to be gained from the representations of the gods and pharaoh in his assorted regalia, the texts of these scenes are important source material for the topography of ancient Egypt.

It may well have been the gods of Nubia depicted in this series of reliefs that the well-known scribe of the necropolis Butehamun had in mind when in a letter to the General Paiankh in Nubia he says that the people back home in Thebes are telling "the gods of the land in which you are" to confer benefits upon the General. During the closing years of the XXth Dynasty, in the period known as the Renaissance, there was trouble in Nubia demanding armed intervention on the part of Herihor's son Paiankh. Butehamun, whose house still stands within the

Medinet Habu enclosure, was very much concerned about this Nubian venture, for his own father, Dhutmose, was up in Nubia along with Paiankh. Since we know that two-dimensional representations of gods were at times the objects of popular veneration, we can conjecture that Butehamun and his associates mounted the stairs to the temple roof and proceeded to the south wall of the terrace to offer their petitions to the Nubian gods there depicted, after perhaps pouring a small libation of water to appease them. In view of our future labors in that "far-off land" of Nubia, it was quite appropriate for us to concern ourselves with these Nubian divinities.

In addition to these terrace reliefs there was also a long strip of nearly fifty scenes, each again of the king offering to various gods, running along the top of the exterior of the south wall of the temple just above the great calendar of feasts. These scenes, beginning just behind the first pylon and extending roughly two-thirds the length of the temple, had suffered considerable weathering from continued sand-blasting over the centuries. When our Expedition returned to Egypt last autumn, it was faced with the task of completing work on these scenes before directing all of its attention to work in Nubia. For the months of October, November, and December we were at the south wall perched on our ladders under a sun that never failed to produce a strong radiant heat. The sun-god Re made his triumphal daily appearance and voyage, just as the temple inscriptions say he should. By the time for our exile to Nubia we did, however, complete the job, and with the final collation on this south wall the epigraphic expedition had at last finished the recording of the Great Temple at Medinet Habu. Many have been involved in this project over the years, but special credit for seeing the task through to the end belongs to Professor George Hughes, the present director of the expedition.

But somehow the Amun of Medinet Habu was unhappy with our work, for we were being banished to Nubia. So far as I know, none of us had ever been parties in a litigation in a court of law and taken the oath by the lord, "If I speak falsehood, let me be sent to Kush." Perhaps it was our failure to offer food or pour a libation to Amun that was the cause of our exile south at the beginning of this year.

At the outset I should state that the Nubian project of the Oriental Institute, under the overall direction of Professor Keith Seele, was composed of two parts, epigraphic and archaeological. Since it was with the former that I was associated, I shall begin with it. To Professor Hughes and his Chicago House staff, Professor Nims, Messrs. Coleman, Foster, Greener, and myself, was charged the recording of the Beit el Wali temple of Ramses II, located about 40 miles south of Assuan. Although minute in size when compared with Ramses II's colossal Abu Simbel temple, his Beit el Wali speos contains probably the finest reliefs in any Nubian temple. These scenes had by no means escaped the notice of epigraphers in the years past; publications of the major scenes range from the ludicrous drawings penned by Rifaud to the excellent work of Roeder. I urge anyone who wants a good Egyptological laugh to have a look at plates 179-80 in J. J. Rifaud, *Voyage en Egypte, en Nubie, et lieux convoisins*. In spite of the fact that Roeder's publication represents the finest job of epigraphy in recording any Nubian temple, the staff of the Nubian expedition thought that a facsimile recording in accordance with the standards used at Medinet Habu was essential, in view of the impending fate of the Nubian monuments.



Scene from the Temple of Beit el Wali showing Ramses II attacking Nubian Village

The Beit el Wali rock-cut temple, a product of the earlier years of Ramses II's reign, is not only a document of the pharaoh's Nubian exploits but also of his prowess in Palestine and Syria, for in keeping with the Egyptians' love of symmetry, the temple decorators adorned the opposing north and south walls of the front half of the temple with scenes recording the king's bellicose activities among his northern and southern foes. Although the scenes of war and tribute and the accompanying texts are general in nature - what we might call pseudo-historical as distinct from the more narrative account contained in Ramses II's Kadesh records - they do contain stylistic features both in art and language that contribute to our understanding of Ramesside culture. The Nubian tribute scene, which is unique among surviving temple records, was no easy task to record; but the drawings when published should present as clear a reproduction of the complicated reliefs as is possible.

In the midst of our work on the animals from the Dark Continent we did have our moments of amusement. The old Nubian guard of the temple, who always carried a shot-gun, was, as we came to learn, a widely travelled man, and many years ago he had been to the wild interior of the south Sudan on a safari. Having been in contact with live specimens of the creatures we were attempting to record, he presented us for our edification with a running commentary in Arabic. If we were amused by his adventures, even more so were our Egyptian helpers whom we had brought along with us from Luxor. Occasionally, I must confess at my instigation, the ghaffir would depart from the subject matter at hand on the wall and describe huge pythons, as long as the temple, that could swallow a man. Lying down with his arms and legs spread out, he would demonstrate the proper way to sleep in python territory to avoid being engulfed alive. Our Luxor locals took this all in with great bewilderment; indeed their feelings must have resembled those of their forebears upon hearing the "Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor," with its huge serpent.

In spite of these interludes we did finish the scene and all the remainder of the temple, with the exception of one scene in the sanctuary, to which we shall return this coming season. When the volume appears, there will be additions to and improvements upon previous publications. We epigraphers and artists hope that the gods of this temple will be properly satisfied and permit us to return to Luxor to continue our service where we left off before our exile.

The archaeological phase of the past season's work in Nubia was under the direction of Dr. Herbert Ricke of the Swiss Institute in Cairo, and his staff included Mr. Fingerhut, Field Architect of the Swiss Institute, Labib Habachi, serving as archaeological consultant, and Fouad Jacoub, representing the Department of Antiquities. Mrs. Ricke looked after the daily needs of all of us, so that our exile in Nubia was vastly ameliorated. First on the agenda for the archaeologists was the architectural survey of the Beit el Wali temple. One of the significant conclusions reached about this edifice is that the first portion of the temple, previously regarded as an open court, was in fact originally roofed with a mud-brick vault similar to those still in place in the Ramesseum precinct. Thus the battle and tribute scenes were intended to be well-protected from the elements.

After completing the work on the temple, the archaeologists devoted their

attention to the myriads of graves situated in the area. Although they were all badly plundered, enough fragments of pottery have been gathered to permit an analysis of the material. I understand from Cairo that the meager looking fragments are proving to be extremely interesting, and expectations are high for significant results that will contribute to our knowledge of the rather enigmatic Nubian cultures.

With the southern limit of the Expedition's concession at Kalabsha, the team worked its way northwards on both sides of the Nile, combing the rocky terrain for archaeological vestiges, to the northern limit at Khor Dehmit. In terms of objects the results were disappointing: a glass flask with a troublesome Greek inscription, a number of libation slabs with depressions in the form of a sacred lake, and a peculiarly decorated obelisk of the late period being the most significant finds. On the other hand, what appear to be hopelessly uninspired architectural remains are, according to Dr. Ricke, proving to be of interest as he proceeds with his reconstructions from the data gathered during the season's campaign. These remains include a rock-cut shrine of Roman date in the wadi northwest of Tafa village that may have served as a resting place for the cult image of the Tafa temple during festival processions and the previously unexcavated "Bergkapelle", also of probable Roman date, located atop the northern rock of the Bab Kalabsha. At the end of the archaeologists' season the complex of mud-brick structures situated on what is now the island of Dar-Mus were examined. It is at present too early to comment on the nature of these remains, and about all that can be safely asserted is that they appear to be Christian and dateable to after the Islamic conquest, if the evidence of several Islamic coins found in the ruins be considered.

Plans are being made for continued exploration in Nubia and the Sudan this coming season. This time attention will be focused upon the southern extent of Egyptian Nubia and the area just across the border in the Sudan.

Edward F. Wente

Archaeological News

A recent communication from Nicholas B. Millet, Director of the Center in Cairo, tells us that Dr. Pahor Labib, Director of the Coptic Museum, invites an American university or museum to work with the Department of Antiquities of the United Arab Republic in the excavation of a monastic site at Abu Faina. This site, in the Minia District near Abu Kerkas (or Qurqas) and not far from Tuna el-Gebel, was occupied from the fourth to the fourteenth century and includes a monastery and several churches. While Dr. Labib estimates that it would require around ten years to excavate the site properly, he at present invites participation in soundings to locate the buildings, tombs, and cemeteries included in the complex. Because of the climate, work should be done only between December and March, Dr. Labib has stated that a contract could be drawn between the participating institution and the Department of Antiquities calling for the sharing of finds on a fifty-fifty basis. For further information, Mr. Millet may be addressed at the office of the Center in Cairo: Apartment 4, 23, Sharia Hassan Pascha Sabry, Zamalek, Cairo, Egypt, U. A. R.

News of Members of the Center

Dr. George T. Scanlon, Islamic Fellow of the Center in Egypt during the past two seasons, has been appointed to teach Islamic History and Art at the University of California in Berkeley. Another member of the Center, the Egyptologist, Kr. Klaus Baer, is in the Department of Near Eastern Languages at the same institution.

Cornelius Vermeule spent the months of June through August in Greece and Asia Minor. During July he led an expedition to Caria, Lycra, Pisidia, Pamphylia and a number of small Greek islands. The group of ten, all involved in archaeology or ornithology, copied inscriptions, mapped sites, collected birds and turtles, and photographed sculpture, particularly at the less-accessible sites radiating from Antalya. The party travelled by means of a Greek caique, chartered in Piraeus.

Dr. John Alden Williams, former Islamic Fellow of the Center and now Professor in the Institute for Near Eastern Studies at McGill University, will leave on January 1st for a year abroad. Much of his time will be spent in London, working on problems of Islamic art, but he hopes, conditions permitting, also to revisit the Near East. (See also "Publications by Members of the Center").

Publications by Members of the Center

Grube, Ernst J. "Two Hispano-Islamic Silks" in The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, XIX, 1960, 77-85. Illus., plates.

In a well-documented article, illustrated with parallels in textile and other media, Dr. Grube attributes these fine pieces to 12th-century Spain.

Nims, Charles F. "Demotic Papyrus Loeb 62: a Reconstruction," in Acta Orientalia XXV, 1961, 266-276.

This demotic papyrus, of the Greek period, seems to furnish confirmation of marriage customs prevailing in the time of Ptolemy Philometor. Apparently the father of the bride turned over to the husband a sum of money which, in the event that the woman became pregnant or bore a child within an allotted time, would be treated as dowry; if, on the other hand, the marriage proved to be unfruitful, the husband would, by contract, return the sum with interest and the union would be abrogated.

Parker, Richard A. "The Durative Tenses in P. Rylands IX," in Journal of Near Eastern Studies XX, 1961, 180-187.

This papyrus of the Persian period furnished numerous examples of the durative tenses, a system that "is an essential element of early demotic and doubtless of Ptolemaic and Roman demotic as well...the recognition of its existence means that the scholar has a new and very helpful guide to a safe path through some of the quicksands of translation."

Schulman, Alan R. "Three Shipwrecked Scarabs," in Expedition, The Bulletin of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania 3, 24-25. Illus.

Dr. Schulman here describes three scarabs found by a University Museum Expedition last summer in a Bronze Age ship lost off Cape Gelidonia, Turkey. The latest of the scarabs can be dated probably to the reign of Ramesses II and thus confirms other evidence that the ship may have been lost in the thirteenth century. How these scarabs happened to be on a ship carrying copper and bronze from Cyprus is a matter for speculation.

Simpson, William Kelly "The Tomb of Keka nefer, Child of the Nursery of Tutankhamun's Court...." in Illustrated London News, June 24, 1961, 1066-1067. Illus. (Archaeological Section No. 2055).

".... Discoveries from Old Kingdom to Coptic Times, at Toshka West," in Illustrated London News, July 15, 1961, 94-95. Illus. (Archaeological Section No. 2058).

Those members who have read Dr. Simpson's and Mr. Terrace's accounts of the excavations of the Yale-Pennsylvania Expedition in Newsletter No. 42, will be interested in these fuller, extensively illustrated articles on the first season's results of this American salvage expedition in the region soon to be submerged by the waters of the High Dam.

Wente, Edward F. "Dwiw.f sdm in Late Egyptian," in Journal of Near Eastern Studies XX, 1961, 120-123.

Here Dr. Wente discusses a comparatively rare grammatical construction involving a clause of circumstantial relative type used after an undefined antecedent and containing the Third Future.

Williams, John Alden Islam, Braziller, 1961, 320p. (Great Religions of Modern Man).

This book, to appear in November, will consist of translations of religious texts arranged, with commentary, so as to form an introduction to Islamic religious thought. The material will include many new translations made by Dr. Williams as well as some from other hands.

